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ABSTRACT

An evaluative study examined the role communication scholars should play in the planning, development and teaching of peace studies courses. Numerous surveys indicate increased student concern over world communication and peace. The language and war metaphors being used by the various governments in the Persian Gulf crisis illustrate how the misuse of language impedes the communication process. Most communication departments already offer courses conducive to the teaching of peace education in communication classes. These courses could very easily include a chapter or section on peacemaking. For example, courses such as group problem solving, discussion, ethics, conflict management, leadership, debate, bargaining and negotiation, and interpersonal communication could add segments on peacemaking. Offering a course in peacemaking and dialogue is another highly recommended option within the capabilities of communication educators. (Twenty-seven references are attached.) (KEH)

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN PEACE AND GLOBAL FUTURE STUDIES

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Paper presented at the National Speech Communication Association Conference, Chicago, IL, November 1-4, 1990.

This paper is a follow-up study to a paper presented at ICA in New Orleans, (Van Hoeven, May, 1988) and a secondary study presented at the Northwestern Peace Studies Conference (Van Hoeven, July, 1989). This three-year examination of the role communication scholars should play in the teaching of peace studies courses is based on the literature and authors involvement with an interdisciplinary approach at Western Michigan University. It is my argument that communication scholars need to be involved in the planning, development and teaching of peace studies courses whether these courses are in departments of communication or departments and colleges in other areas throughout the university. Our valuable input is needed.

The recent developments in the Middle East reinforce the 80's "me first" mentality among the young and old that has developed in the United States. The competitive nature of our president is apparent in his desire to show control and power by sending thousands of US soldiers into Saudia Arabia. A very different approach to conflict was taken in the 70's by President Jimmy Carter but the economic issues were not the same. Arnett (1986) warns us that limited foreseeable resources may affect our communication strategies but necessarily doesn't have to and then goes on to argue that the "question before us is whether we can give up communication strategies of the past and begin to discover ways to communicate and work together in the midst of limited resources and an uncertain future." p. 4. One would think that these words had been written for the global situation as we know it in September, 1990.

Historically, more than ever before, communication scholars must speak up and be heard. We have viable tools that are so desperately needed in this time of global crisis and yet very few of us are speaking out creating a vision and leading the way. Hopefully this conference will inspire and challenge many of us to return

to our campuses and lead the way into the 90's regarding the role of communication in the study of peace.

Epp in 1973 while serving as president and professor of history and communication at Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo in Ontario, called for a dialogue between pacifists and nonpacifists who still claim, in 1990, to be pursuing the same goal, namely peace for the world. It is an embarrassment to think that seventeen years later we are still highly involved in a military buildup, having been involved in numerous wars such as Granada, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama and now the Persian Gulf. Redding (1990) in his keynote address presented at the SCA Conference on Ethics in Communication noted that after he had scrutinized recent academic literature in our field could come to only one conclusion: "The overwhelming majority of scholars studying organizational communication have preferred to be spectators rather than disputants in this 'new national debate' on ethics." p. 4. Sound familiar? If Redding were scanning the literature regarding the role of communication in peace studies, it is apparent that he would come to the same conclusion. Ethically, we as communication scholars can no longer remain silent and play the spectator role.

A recent annual survey of 216,362 freshman at 403 colleges and universities informs us that this year's college freshman is more willing to protest for causes and in greater number than their 1960's counterparts. "It's hard to label them," said UCLA education professor Alexander Austin (1990), who has directed the student survey for the last two decades. "They are not just liberal or conservative in any sort of monolithic way." p. 1. They want to be involved in social issues such as the right to have an abortion and redirecting defense money into the environment, education and health care. More and more students since Austin conducted the 1985 survey say they are willing to act on their beliefs.

A recent student/administration clash over "free speech" shanties at Michigan State University (September 24, 1990 - Detroit News) supports the survey in that students are willing to act out the global concerns that they have. The shanties made of plywood were covered with posters and informational brochures explaining the social concerns of the five protest groups who joined together in the demonstration. The five groups consisted of the Free Speech Coalition, the Committee for Education on Latin America, the Democratic Socialists of America and the MSU Green Action. MSU officials say the shanties violate university rules on overnight camping and infringe on rights of other students. Protesting students say 'we can't be lethargic." Lethargic is exactly what we as communication scholars have been and the students are waiting.

Another example helps to support the fact that students are ready for peace education. Over a year ago more than 500 students from the University of Kentucky and residents from Lexington signed a petition urging UK to implement a course on peace and alternatives to violence. The petition specifically asked for a course that, "would explore the use of non-violent force---its history, methods, and practitioners---and the promotion of peace." Peace Times, p. 1. Interest in such a course resulted from a talk given by Washington Post columnist Colman McCarthy, who spoke at their Newman Center as part of the distinguished Speakers Program.

McCarthy (1990) asked himself five years ago whether peace could be taught. Responding like a journalist he phoned a few academic experts to get their ideas. Following the phone calls and listening for answers from these experts he realized that the experts talked a great deal but had really very little to say He then decided to do the legwork and personal involvement that usually gets at the truth and went to a Washington, D.C. school and offered himself as a volunteer teacher of peace. He was welcomed by the principal and faculty and 25 juniors and seniors enrolled in his

course "Alternatives to Violence." Following a successful semester where students highly regarded the course, he took the course to four universities (American, Georgetown, Maryland and George Mason) and two more high schools. This example is a challenge to all us in the academic setting to stop talking and start doing.

Do the results of Austin's (1990) survey give us any insight as to what role we as communication scholars should be playing in regard to peace studies programs in our colleges and universities? According to Bloom (1987), the word of the day is "care" and then he goes on to warn us that "without recognition of important questions of common concern, there cannot be serious liberal education." p. 343. Perhaps Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) have even more to say to us in communication when they review their ten trends from Megatrends (1982) which shaped the 1980's to predicting ten new directions for the 1990's in Megatrends 2000. Remember their phrase, "We are drowning in information and starving for knowledge," in Megatrends? Some eight years later it seems as if this trend is increasing beyond all former comprehension where no one seems to know where we are going as change now seems to be a part of our daily experience as we are bombarded with more media than ever before be it print, video, TV, film or radio.

Naisbett and Aburdene (1990) warn us that "the vast amount of data that comes your way each day will probably whiz right by you," (p. 13) and then challenge us to formulate our own world view of the day, opposing viewpoints, and new information. Our authors go on to predict that the "most exciting breakthroughs of the 21st century will occur not because of technology but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human." p. 16. Both the students in the survey and Naisbitt and Aburdene agree that the 1990's will force us to make choices regarding the pollution of our environment whether it be chemical or nuclear and the students say that they are ready to protest for these humanistic concerns.

Continually we are being asked about the content of our curriculum and usually every five years or so find ourselves in a curriculum review process of one form or another. When in these review processes very seldom do we ask ourselves some of the more pertinent questions such as why does the higher education system seem to fail students in so many ways or what about the changing nature of the students in our colleges and universities.

Both faculty and the content of our curriculum have been severely criticized and challenged in recent writings (Bloom 1987, Hirsch 1988, and Sykes 1988). Reports such as A Nation at Risk, Integrity in the Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community and Involvement in Learning, Realizing the Potential of Higher Education reinforce the serious nature of the problems and concerns facing faculty, students and the curriculum as a whole. Scholars in communication, Winsor (1989), Troester and Mester (1987), Van Hoeven (1989), Arnett (1985) and those in other areas of the liberal arts curriculum, Van Dinh (1987), Reardon (1983), Sloan (1983), Botkin, et al., discuss how todays educational systems have, "failed to respond to the challenge of global issues, thereby contributing to our lack of preparedness to live harmoniously in an interdependent world." p. 53.

We really have little history of active peace education taking place in our educational systems and those of us in the communication field have only recently begun to speak out. Therefore, the literature review in this paper has attempted to grasp on to what others have said and make application to our discipline. Therefore, the question remains, "Do we in communication have a role in peace studies programs?" My answer is a resounding yes and I will attempt to demonstrate to the reader the reasons for my positive answer.

We are reminded of our educational responsibility Botkin, Mahdi and Malitza (1979), Reardon (1983, Solan (1983), and Fletcher (1990) by providing alternatives to

growing up in a warring society. Reardon believes that we have a responsibility to contribute to the disarmament process by exploring and clarifying the relationships of the disarmament process and a fundamental concern of world order research. The main object of this inquiry should be the transformation of the global war system to a peace system. The challenge encourages us as educators to search for basic and fundamental knowledge from which we can then derive new strategies for the transformation process to take place.

Those of us in communication attempting to convey the concepts of peace to students find ourselves in a position of the unknown since most of us would agree with the writers above that we have been raised and educated in a society that prepares only for war and not peace. Fletcher (1990) reminds us that we continually state that we are a country under God yet never question what that statement means in our educational environments. It is time to move beyond the status quo and stretch the boundaries of the curriculums to include what could be possible. Teachers of peace education serve as change agents, "influencing the environment, shaping a future vision and equipping students with skills necessary to live in a changing global society." p. 1. She goes on to say that these programs teach, "transcencence as well as transmission, creativity as well as continuity and critical thinking as well as loyalty." p. 1.

We in communication can take note and go one step further when Sloan (1983) says that the "basic aim of educators is to provide for the healthy growth and development of children and to create a culture worthy to receive them." p. 1. It shakes the basic foundation of our education system when knowingly our government is preparing for their destruction through its military build up and constant preparation for war not peace. Sloan reminds us that efforts for peace are connected with education because they involve the ways in which we attempt to

know and understand reality. These ways of knowing affect the way we relate to the world and this world we apprehend and live in is structured by our unconsciousness.

Taking this one step further includes a change in our way of thinking which then clearly becomes a communication process. Imagine thinking that power and control could no longer make claim to being the ultimate reality. Fletcher (1990) reminds us that peace education teaches students in developing decision-making abilities that will give empowerment to overcome fear and alienation through action while Sloan (1983) discusses how the misuse of language continues to plague us. One has only to study the language and war metaphors being used by our government during this recent invasion in the Persian Gulf and we understand what Sloan is implying.

Very few scholars in communication have written specifically to the role communication should play in peace studies programs. Although it is interesting to note that Cherry as early as 1971 warns us that the delusion that increased powers of communication will bring us all closer together into better understanding and sense of human compassion is a false belief and may be increasing our knowledge by the reporting from our fast expanding media network but this adds nothing to our knowledge by encounter.

But Cherry (1971) then precedes to say that one way communication does not involve the person in the events symbolized in media reporting and therefore the receiver can easily objectify the events. But when you are in conversation with someone you are fully aware that he or she is of the same nature as yourself (human). This communication process, "takes a conscious, deliberate intellectual act to respond to them as persons. p. 10. Schiller (1976) supports this reasoning when he discusses communication and cultural domination and states that, " a largely one-

directional flow of information from core to periphery represents the reality of power. So, too, does the promotion of a single language such as English." p. 6.

Some writers in communication have spoken directly to the role communication should play in peace education. Arnett (1985) discusses dialogue while Reardon (2988) speaks about dialogue and conversation. Winsor (1989) and Van Dinh (1987) believe we should be leaders in teaching negotiating processes and Troester and Mester (1987) and Kahn (1988) include the need for communication skills in practicing decision making and conflict management.

Reardon (1988) is very specific when she states, "Dialogue and conversation are important ways to share and test learning and also to connect personal, individual change to social and political change." p. 49. She believes that conversation is far more transformative than dialogue since in dialogue participants fall into a pattern of the questioner and the questioned (teacher-student). "Conversation connotes a community of inquirers, sharing questions and insights, mutually responsible for creating the knowledge necessary to the changes our common values impel us to seek." p. 49. Arnett in both Dwell in Peace and Communication and Community extensively discusses this process as dialogue and its importance in building global community.

We are challenged by both Reardon's and Arnett's work. The transactional model of communication taught in our interpersonal communication classes becomes the answer to Reardon's call for a need to change the communication modes. She contends that our current language is "primarily conditioned by the dualistic reductionist paradigm at the base of the war system, the competitive, conflictual core of our society that reduces most major issues to two opposing sides." p. 49. The transactional model provides an opportunity to exchange relevant concepts,

information, values and visions which in turn helps in developing the human capacities for peacemaking.

Van Dinh (1987), a former Vietnamese diplomat and presently at Temple University, now "realizes that diplomacy is communication at the government level, and as such is changing with the changing conditions of the world and is especially influenced by the means of communication with which it is carried out." p. viii. Questions of nuclear war and peace and social justice must be addressed by both diplomats and communicators if they are true to their "professional claim that their objective is to create understanding and cooperation among countries and people." p. xiv. This communication process can occur when concrete information is shared and lines of communication are kept open. This process of representing, reporting and negotiating is already taught in many of our communication classes such as discussion, leadership, bargaining and negotiating, and group problem solving. Now the application to peacemaking becomes the next step.

A survey of communication departments by Troester and Mester (1987) notes the relative absence of peace education in communication departments yet found chairs of departments strongly agreeing that communication educators have an obligation to address issues of peace given the nature of the discipline. Here again we witness the "all talk" and no action that McCarthy (1990) addresses. Yet Winsor (1987) believes professors of communication can be leaders in "development of attitudes toward the struggle toward minimizing conflict among and between persons, successful negotiation processes, and minimizing the momentum toward war." p. 12. He too supports the idea that communication departments already have many courses that could serve as a core for peace studies and lists courses such as intrapersonal, public communication conflict management and communication ethics.

The questions still remain with us. Can we teach peace? What is our role as communication educators? Do we offer peace courses in our departments of communication? Or do we play a role in the integrated approach as I strongly proposed in a former paper presented at SCA in New Orleans (Van Hoeven 1988)? Many years ago Dewey (1933) criticized traditional education when he said, "the subject matter is learned in isolation; it was put, as it were, in a water tight compartment. Where is it now? Probably still stored away in the compartment." p. 48. Nearly sixty years later this fragmented static quality is referred to by Bloom (1987) when he discusses true liberal education and what it entails. He states that this liberal education:

> requires that the student's whole life be radically changed by it that what he learns may affect his action, his tastes, his choices, that no previous attachment be immune to examination and hence re-evaluation. Liberal education puts everything at risk and requires students who are able to risk everything. p. 370

Sobrino (1990) discusses two aspects to a university. The first and most in evidence is its commitment to culture and knowledge and use of the intellect. While the second and not so evident requires its concern with social reality because a university cannot escape the social forces. It has an obligation to transform and enlighten the society in which it lives. He then goes on to challenge us by answering how this is carried out:

> The university must carry out this general commitment with the means uniquely at its disposal: we as an intellectual community must analyze causes; use imagination and creatively together to discover remedies; communicate to our constituencies a consciousness that inspires the freedom of self-determination; educate professionals with a conscience, who will be the immediate instruments of such a transformation; and continually hone an educational institution that is academically excellent and ethically oriented. p. 151.

With challenges and questions such as these we do have our work cut out for us. It seems as if we have been turning a deaf ear to the educators, theologians and journalists that have been asking the questions. I believe that we do have the knowledge and the educational environment to carry out the task at hand. Perhaps the question to ourselves is, "Do we want the task?" As we now sit on the brink of war in the Persian Gulf how can we not take on the task. We have failed our students of the sixties who at that time cried out about what we as a country were doing in Vietnam. We have had twenty years and only a few departments of communication throughout the country are currently involved in peace studies. And we are not alone, no one else has taken on the task either. That does not excuse us and therefore the challenge of this paper. We must begin to make some changes.

In conclusion and as an update to the introduction to this paper, I am still involved with the university peace course at Western Michigan University. It is now taught as part of faculty teaching load but still with an interdisciplinary approach. We have approximately 90 students enrolled in the course every winter semester with many more students wanting to get into the class. A few departments, communication department included, give minor or major credit for the course while

otherwise students get credit toward graduation requirements. Following the work that I have done for this paper I believe that it is time for communication departments to become more active in teaching peace education in communication classes.

Most of our departments already offer courses that provide the skills that the authors cited in this paper say are required for teaching peace education. These courses could very easily include a chapter or section on peacemaking. Courses such as group problem solving, discussion, ethics, conflict management, leadership, debate, bargaining and negotiation and interpersonal communication would be good courses to try adding a segment on peacemaking. Offering a course in peacemaking and dialogue is another recommendation that I highly support. We have the scholars capable of fulfilling the "call" but will they answer positively is the question I leave with you.

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